

835 and influence may have won for him. One or two instances
556 are known of contact between parent and child, a matter in
which it is the duty of no one to interfere; if a person thus
flouts public opinion, it is his own affair.

648 In view of the firmness of the marriage bond and the ab-
167 sence of professional prostitutes, it is difficult to explain the
wholesale exodus of Bella Coola women to Victoria in the
last century. In some peculiar manner this came to be
regarded as socially proper. The daughters both of chiefs and
commoners trooped off for a varying period of months or years
and those who returned brought back venereal diseases which
[164] appear to have been unknown before that date. Few of them
bore children afterwards, a factor of prime importance in es-
timating the reasons for the decline of the Bella Coola. The
motives which led the women to the city seem to have been:
(1) the desire for wealth; (2) the influence of strong liquor;
(3) the lure of a strange environment; (4) the attraction of the
white men, on account of their higher culture.

It is fortunate for the Bella Coola that this fatal custom
has ceased to be considered estimable, although the harm
already done may be irremediable.